



CELEBRATION OF THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
DISCOVERY BY ROBERT CAVALIER DE LA SALLE
OF THE
MOUTH OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

ROOMS OF THE CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, January 9, 1882.

THE Ninth day of April, 1882, will be the Two-hundredth Anniversary of the discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi River by ROBERT CAVALIER DE LA SALLE.

The members of the Chicago Historical Society think that this historical event should be appropriately commemorated on that day.

In view of the fact that LA SALLE was one of the first white men who ever set foot upon the soil where Chicago now stands and that his settlement on Peoria Lake, in March, 1680, where he built Fort Creve-Cœur, was the first civilized occupation of what now constitutes the State of Illinois; and as it was from this point that he improvised the expedition to discover the mouth of the Mississippi, the Historical Society of this City has ventured to suggest that the Historical Associations located in the valleys of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers should unite in a celebration of that discovery in the city of New Orleans, April 9th, 1882.

At a meeting of this Society on the 3d instant, Hon. Isaac N. Arnold, its President, called attention to the following letter addressed to him by Hon. E. B. Washburne, a member of this Society:

CHICAGO, December 27, 1881.

Hon. ISAAC N. ARNOLD, *President of the Chicago Historical Society*—

DEAR SIR:—I have just received a letter from the celebrated French historian, Pierre Margry, dated Paris, the 8th instant. He gives me an interesting account of the family of Pierre La Clède, the founder of St. Louis, which must be valuable to his descendants in that city.

It is not my purpose here to speak of La Clède, particularly as M. Margry says he has sent the same information to one of his descendants now living in St. Louis. My object is to call the attention of the Society, through you, to a suggestion which M. Margry makes in his letter. After speaking of the last volume he has published, which treats of the discovery by sea of the mouth of the Mississippi by d'Iberville, he says:

In considering this matter, I can not forbear to say that there is an excellent occasion for an act of justice in honor of Cavalier de LaSalle. Next year, on the 9th of April, 1882, will be the 200th anniversary of the first discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi by the great Rouennais (LaSalle). The Congress of the United States in having me make the collection of papers which recall the fertile enterprises of this illustrious man has erected a monument to him which will make his name live eternally in history. Why should not the Chicago Historical Society unite with the other Societies of the Valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi to make a commemorative ceremony on the date of April 9th, 1882? Did not LaSalle do more than Father Marquette and Louis Joliet, and certainly more than Father Hennepin, whose discovery of the Falls of St. Anthony has been celebrated? I take the liberty, sir, to submit to you this idea, as well as a decision by which the Academy of Rouen, the natal town of LaSalle, will

associate itself with the Society of Chicago, and, if possible, with other societies established on the soil of one of her children. To my mind, it is important to have the people keep up the remembrance of a common glory, for there is a principal of peace and affection in such an association with the past worthy of all respect.

I think this suggestion of M. Margry is worthy of the serious consideration of our Society, and perhaps you might deem it proper to call its attention to the subject at its next monthly meeting, with a view of taking such initiatory steps as shall seem proper. Yours very truly,

E. B. WASHBURN.

After a discussion of the subject, Mr. E. G. Mason then offered the following preamble and resolutions which were adopted:

WHEREAS, The 9th day of April, A.D. 1882, will be the 200th anniversary of the discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi River by Robert Cavelier de LaSalle, and it is deemed fitting by the Chicago Historical Society that the event should be appropriately commemorated;

Resolved, That this Society recommends to the other historical associations, located in the valleys of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, that a celebration under their joint auspices of this great discovery be held in the city of New Orleans on the 9th day of April next.

Resolved, That a committee of seven be appointed by this Society, of which its President shall be Chairman, whose duty it shall be to correspond with the said associations, and to report at some future meeting whether such joint action is feasible, and what further steps should be taken.

Resolved, That this Society will address a memorial, in which said associations will be requested to join, to the Congress of the United States, asking that a joint resolution be adopted providing for the appointment of a committee from both Houses to attend such celebration, and for such other measures in regard thereto as may seem proper.

The undersigned, a committee appointed by virtue of the second resolution, to correspond with the historical associations named, beg leave to submit this matter to your consideration and to express a hope that we may hear from you on the subject at an early day.

In conformity with the third resolution, the Society will join the other associations in addressing a memorial to Congress, a copy of which we enclose to be signed and forwarded to Washington, if you should deem advisable. We have the honor to be, etc.

ISAAC N. ARNOLD,	} Committee.
EDWARD G. MASON,	
E. B. WASHBURN,	
THOMAS DRUMMOND,	
WM. K. ACKERMAN,	
MARK SKINNER,	
EDWARD S. ISHAM,	

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CHICAGO, January 5, 1882.

Hon. ISAAC N. ARNOLD,

President of the Chicago Historical Society.

MY DEAR SIR:—I have observed with pleasure that your Society is initiating a project to celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi River, by LaSalle.

Nothing, in my judgment, can be more appropriate than the commemoration of that great historic event by the historical associations of the States in the Valleys of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, and by all the people therein who have lived to see the development which has followed the work of the great discoverer.

Fully appreciating what you have undertaken, and desiring to coöperate with you, I respectfully authorize you to draw on me for One Thousand (\$1000) Dollars for the purpose of procuring the painting of a portrait of LaSalle, providing it can be done from existing material, to exhibit on the occasion of the celebration, and after that to adorn the walls of your Society.

Yours very truly,

MARSHALL FIELD.

CHICAGO, January 6, 1882.

MARSHALL FIELD, Esq.,

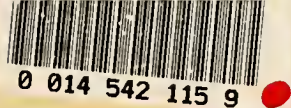
My Dear Sir:—I received last evening your note, containing your very generous proposition in regard to a portrait of LaSalle. You authorize me to draw on you "for \$1000, for the purpose of procuring the portrait of LaSalle, providing it can be done from existing material, to exhibit on the occasion of the celebration" of the two-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi, "and after that to adorn the walls of the Chicago Historical Society." In behalf of this Society, and of our citizens generally, and, indeed, for the whole valley of the Mississippi, so far as I may be permitted to speak for it, I thank you for this liberal and graceful offer. It seems to me peculiarly fit and proper that one among the leading merchants of the great valley should cause this portrait to be placed on the walls of our Society, where for years to come the people may study the face of one of the grandest characters in early American history.

I should be glad to receive any suggestions you desire to make, relative to the artist to whom this commission shall be given.

I learn from our friend, Mr. Washburne, that authentic pictures of LaSalle are in existence in France, and he has already kindly sent for photographs of them. With great respect, I am,

Very truly yours,

ISAAC N. ARNOLD.



ROBERT CAVELIER DE LA SALLE.

HIS DISCOVERY OF THE MOUTH OF THE MISSISSIPPI—PROPOSED COMMEMORATION OF THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS DISCOVERY BY LA SALLE.

We print a letter addressed by Hon. E. B. Washburne to Hon. Isaac N. Arnold, the President of the Chicago Historical Society, in relation to a suggestion of Pierre Margry, the French historian, that the historical societies in the Valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers should celebrate the 200th anniversary of the discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi on the 9th of April, 1882, by Robert Cavelier de LaSalle. We think the suggestion a most excellent one and that it will meet with exceptional favor, not only with the historical societies referred to, but among all lovers of history interested in our early discoveries. Among all the discoverers in New France, LaSalle stands out conspicuously as one of the greatest, boldest, and most enterprising, and whose history has all the interest of a romance. To our judgment, nothing could be more appropriate than the celebration referred to. It is due to one of the most remarkable men, not only of his time, but of any age, for La Salle, with his high education and rare intelligence, had the characteristics of indomitable will, unsurpassed courage, and unheard-of tenacity, which have impressed his name indelibly on the page of history. When we stand in the presence of what has followed La Salle's discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi 200 years ago, it is impossible to withhold an expression of our wonder, amazement, and admiration.

The States at the present day bordering on the Mississippi River, the mouth of which La Salle discovered, April 9, 1682, and its tributaries, are Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, W. Virginia, Penn., Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. We presume that all these States, or the local historical societies which have been established therein, will associate themselves with any movement looking to an appropriate celebration of an event having such an influence in the history of the world as the discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi. There would seem to be a certain propriety in the Chicago Historical Society taking the initiative in this matter. La Salle is the founder of Illinois, and he was one of the first white men who ever set foot on the soil now occupied by our magnificent city. On the 4th of January, 1680, he reached Peoria Lake with his expedition, where he built "Fort Creve-Cœur," which was the first civilized occupation of the country which now constitutes the State of Illinois. Terrible disasters, misfortunes, and perils attended La Salle before he built Fort Creve-Cœur. The very name—Broken-Heart—is suggestive of the sorrows and sufferings which must have appalled the heart of the brave explorer. Obligated to abandon and dismantle his fort, it was in March, 1680, that La Salle improvised his expedition to find the mouth of the Mississippi. It was, therefore, on the soil of Illinois that the great undertaking was fitted out. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Chicago Historical Society will take early steps looking to a celebration of the discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi, by La Salle, on the 9th of April, 1882, at some place to be agreed on by the various historical societies interested in the matter.—*Chicago Tribunc, Jan. 4th, 1882.*

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